DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 911 EA 016 631

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TITLE Evaluation for School Improvement Projects.
INSTITUTION Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. School of Education.
SPONS AGENCY Pennsylvania State Dept. of Education, Harrisburg.
PUB DATE Aug 81
GRANT 632127
NOTE 53p.; For related documents, see EA 016 620-630.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh, 5T 17 Forbes Quad, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Case Studies; Charts; Consultants; *Consultation Programs; Educational Development; Educational Facilities Improvement; *Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation; *Long Range Planning; Needs Assessment; *School Districts; Tables (Data); *Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS *Pennsylvania School Improvement Program; University of Pittsburgh PA

ABSTRACT

This document provides a case history of the efforts of the University of Pittsburgh's School of Education to serve as one school district's Technical Assistance Agency during the first year of the Pennsylvania School Improvement Program (1980-81). Brief descriptions in Sections I and II of the Pennsylvania program's general and specific settings, and an outline in Section III of program procedures for evaluation and needs assessment lead up to Section IV, on evaluation and development, of which the bulk of the document is comprised. Section IV includes (1) a situational definition and classification of focus areas for school improvement; (2) a sample school profile including information on standardized test scores in reading and mathematics; (3) considerations of the school's goal structures, time allocations, and priorities and plans of action at the building level; and (4) a synthesis of plans of action at the district level. The document's final two sections briefly discuss leadership training, evaluation and development, and documentation and school improvement. The report contains nine charts and seven tables. (JBM)

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EVALUATION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Charles J. Gorman
University of Pittsburgh
August, 1981

This document was developed under a grant funded
by the Pennsylvania Department of Education
to the University of Pittsburgh,
School of Education.

Grant No. 632127

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the
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Cover design by Barbara Fredette

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Iconography of a

Have you ever wondered what the connection may be between schools and stars? Can you recall in your minds eye the laboriously child-written words, glorified when topped by a five pointed metallic messenger of "good work."

Graphic symbols provide us with the means to fuse specific and general meanings into one expressive form. A root for the word "symbol" is the Greek verb symballein which means "put together."

The purpose of the star that appears as a part of the School Improvement logo is to trigger an immediate specific association. As a general symbol, the star also has other meaning dimensions that in fact enhance the appropriateness of its use to identify school improvement.

The star has always been a symbol of the spirit (a light) struggling against the forces of darkness (the night) that seek to envelope it.

It signifies rising upwards to the point of origin. This suggests that placement of points is important--a single point should always be thrusting upward (in the opposite position it becomes a pentagram used in witches nasty ceremonies).

In Egyptian hierglyphics the star formed part of the words that stood for "to bring up," "to educate" and "the Teacher."

For some, the star's five points may represent the five senses combined to signify a full perceptual awareness.

When applied to people, certainly we associate a star with brightness. More specifically, a "star" is a person in (almost) any field who is celebrated for high achievement in that area.

In terms of effort, many of us may recall the stars we did, or did not receive. A star is always considered a mark of excellence for Generals, restaurants and now, School Improvement.

Perhaps this brief summary will encourage you to be more aware of visual symbols as rich sources of meaning.

Barbara Fredette
7/81

Postscript

Scintillate, Scintillate, asteroid minific.
Fain would I fathom your nature specific.
Loftily poised in the other capacious,
Strongly resembling a gem carbonacious.

Author Unknown

PREFACE

During the initial year of the Pennsylvania School Improvement Program, school districts and institutions of higher education scurried about to determine what this new effort was about. A kind of relaxed attention prevailed as many educators were reminded of previous long-range planning efforts which were mandated by the state government. As the 1980-81 year began and Wave 1 districts initiated the planning activities, many questions and concerns were articulated through both formal meetings designed to disseminate school improvement and informal contacts.

Within this context, the School of Education of the University of Pittsburgh contracted as a Technical Assistance Agency for one district. The enclosed description or case history is provided as an example of the linkage between evaluation, training and community involvement in school improvement. In presenting this material, fictitious names have been used to refer to the school district and buildings involved in this process.

This report also includes a brief section on documentation of project activities. By including this section, it is hoped that school districts will consider the need to establish systematic documentation processes during the implementation of Action Plans.

Finally, as a representative of an institution of higher education, I wish to promote the viewpoint through this document that school improvement represents an important opportunity for basic education and higher education to join in a renewed effort to improve public confidence in our educational institutions. This challenge cannot be adequately met by basic education and higher education institutions working at cross purposes.

Charles J. Gorman
August 1, 1981

EVALUATION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

I. The General Setting

It has been both evident over scores of years, and well documented during the last two decades that the introduction of educational programming to modify school experiences of students has produced predictable, patterned responses by key participants. The trends include the same reactions to innovations which are reappearing as current plans for school improvement are formulated. This history is important for our previous experiences with new programs have established frames of reference from which we are responding to present initiatives. As a consequence, the substance of the current efforts to improve schools often is being deluged with the past. The patterns of behavior can be forecast with remarkable accuracy. Advocates are enthusiastic, frequently refer to expectations which are unlikely to be realized, and tend to underestimate the obstacles to be encountered. Skeptics are armed with the dismal record of change-efforts in education and problems are quickly identified--the resource problem, the training problem, the time problem, the leadership problem and many others which are reported in the literature and imprinted by the experiences of professional educators. However, the two camps are not evenly distributed. Those who doubt the efficacy of this effort appear to outnumber those who advocate and support this plan. So it is with School Improvement.

Within this general setting, Pennsylvania launched a state-wide program of school improvement during the 1980-81 school year. The Pennsylvania Department of Education developed a structure for school improvement including concepts such as "waves" and "registration," some of which has provoked many of the professionals who are expected to lead school improvement efforts at the school district level. According to the state guidelines, school districts are to

proceed with the preparation of a long-range plan which includes five process steps--initial preparation, needs assessment, action planning, implementation and evaluation. These steps are linked in a linear pattern and the evaluation step is projected as the process which will facilitate the recycling of the planning model. Indeed, one could conclude from the events to date that long-range planning "is" school improvement. Hopefully, this impression can be modified. Does planning of the school improvement type lead to changes as expected? What do we know about the relationships between planning and improvement?

Clearly, the model for long-range planning and school improvement adheres to a rational approach to general problems associated with establishing renewed public confidence in educational systems. The planning model is a familiar one in many respects, not the least of which is the function proposed for the evaluation step. However, a quick review of the history of evaluation is sufficient to illustrate that evaluation has not been very effective in fulfilling this recycling function. One reason for the unimpressive record of evaluation may be attributed to the location of the process in the sequence of steps which comprise the planning model. This assigned position as the final phase of five processes and the attendant recycling function often delegates an insurmountable task to evaluation because project development has been set firmly by all preceeding stages, often with no regard for assessment concerns.

Would the prospects of improvement be elevated if evaluation processes were cast differently? Should evaluation specialists be involved more actively in the initial planning stages? While school improvement projects do not exist primarily to examine issues associated with evaluation, the project does provide an opportunity for specialists to consider alternative approaches to technical problems of evaluation such as those illustrated by the questions above. Perhaps the

question which is central to these developments is: "What functions should evaluation fulfill in school improvement projects which are generally designed to elevate the confidence of a citizenry in public education?

This document includes a description of selected planning processes which were used in a Wave I school district during the 1980-81 school term. The description is intended only to highlight specific evaluation concerns and issues. Reviewers should neither refer to the materials as a prototype for evaluation nor consider the report as a case study. The illustrations and analyses are intended to promote an evolving function for evaluation in planning processes. Rather than the conventional placement of evaluation as the final stage to facilitate recycling, the exemplar promotes the consideration of evaluation concerns, issues and concepts in each phase of planning for school improvement.

II. The Specific Setting

As school districts were assigned to Wave I of the Long Range Planning for School Improvement, the State Department of Education provided training for participants including representatives of community advisory committees. Since the training allowed for the utilization of various methods of planning during the first year, leaders at the school district level often considered the most expedient techniques to planning in general and to the needs assessment step of the model. Meanwhile, schools were encouraged to establish linkage with external agencies such as colleges, universities and intermediate units.

Since some representatives of technical assistance preferred to use evaluation procedures which were unlike those suggested in state guidelines, the opportunity was available to implement evaluation procedures other than the conventional approaches included in the state guidelines. The following evaluation techniques

were used in one Wave I district to fulfill the planning requirements of school improvement:

A. Identify the general focus of improvement.

B. Describe concerns within the general focus of building-level improvement.

C. Define the current situation as documented by formal reports and assessment summaries.

1. The school and previous long-range plans
2. EQA results
3. Achievement Test Results

D. Delineate district goals/objectives and priorities.

E. Construct Action Plans.

F. Synthesize School Improvement Projects.

The first two procedures were used to begin to establish a sociopolitical foundation for local problem solving. As building-level advisory groups were formed, the strategy imbedded in these two initial steps was one of promoting significant involvement through advisory processes. Rather than beginning with activities which would inform participants of the organization's perception about existing conditions, the alternative approach was one of eliciting opinions about their school from community members and parents. It was hypothesized that this approach would both promote participation and build commitment to the school improvement concept.

The third procedure was established to inform participants of the previous institutional planning efforts and present performance levels of students. This information was intended to add to the sociopolitical foundation of the advisory groups by building their level of understanding of the school.

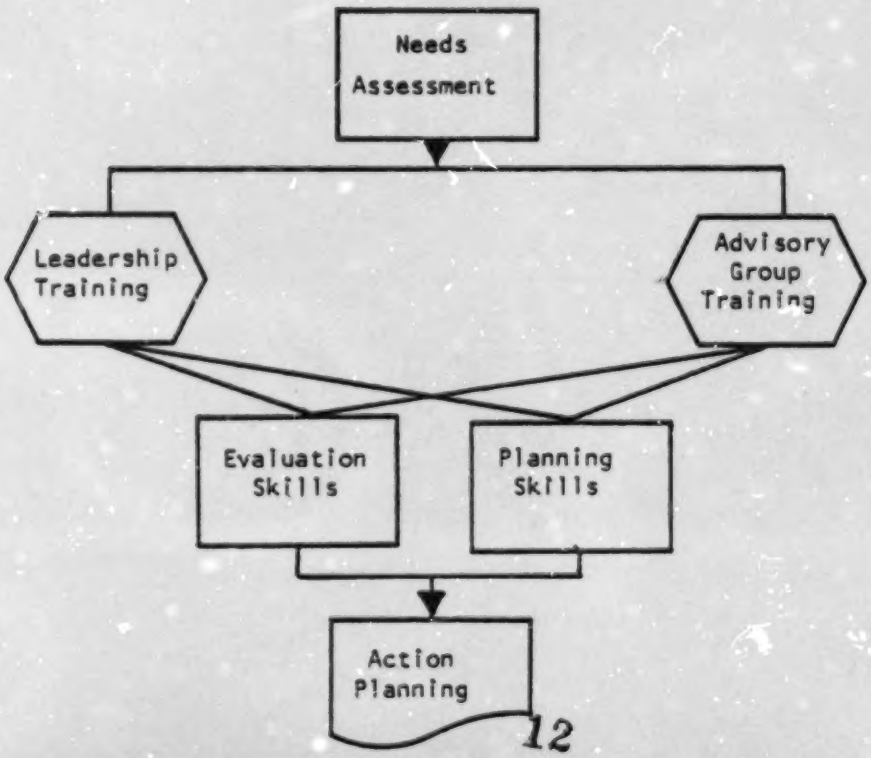
Priorities were then established by the participating adults and these decisions were made on the basis of both concerns and existing conditions as measured by tests and other assessment processes.

Action Plans were then developed on the basis of this foundation. The plans were then examined in terms of district, not building, implications.

While the six steps served to guide a major portion of the planning processes, implementation of the steps incorporated both training and community advising processes which complicated the planning activities. Consequently, the illustration which follows features evaluation processes which incorporate citizen participation in evaluation throughout the Needs Assessment and Action Planning steps. Furthermore, the illustration includes an emphasis on both leadership training associated with the planning model and sociopolitical aspects of community advisory groups engaged in these activities. The chart below illustrates the linkage between evaluation, planning and training processes.

Chart 1

Planning and Evaluation in
Long Range Planning for School Improvement



III. Evaluation and Needs Assessment

Guidelines and Instructions for Long Range Planning included explicit directions for Wave I school districts. Under Section 1: Educational Programs/Services, the following five items were identified under the Needs Assessment section:

Item 1 - List the district's goals adopted by the school board to structure long-range planning in the areas of educational program and services as directly related to the Twelve Goals of Quality Education.

Item 2 - List the titles of the district's Planned Courses (K-12) directly related to each of the Twelve Goals.

a. The list should indicate which Planned Courses include intergroup concepts (understanding others) and which include content related to the history, contribution and roles of minority racial and ethnic groups and of women.

b. Describe the efforts that have been made to coordinate and articulate individual Planned Courses among staff across grades, goal areas and buildings (K-12).

c. Describe the effort that has been made to involve staff in supplementing the curricula so that your school program is tailored to local curricular needs if your district relies on externally produced curriculum (i.e., textbooks, workbooks, commercially packaged programs, etc.) in any goal (K-12).

Item 3 - List the data and information sources actually used to assess student growth. (Examples of data sources are EQA, standardized instruments, locally developed instruments, ESEA Title I measures, etc.)

Item 4 - List by building the goal areas where student growth is evident and list the goal areas where student growth is not evident or goal areas where no data about student growth is available.

Item 5 - List the district and building goal priorities and factors that will be considered in the planning for each goal priority.

For Section 2: School District Management, Needs Assessment must address the following seven items:

Item 1 - List of district management goals adopted by the school board to structure long-range planning.

Item 2 - Describe the local and regional trends observed from a five-year history of student enrollment, area population, ethnic groups, family income

median income in the district compared to surrounding area, land use changes, home ownership and rentals, new housing, zoning and other conditions in the district and surrounding area. Include any conclusions you draw from the trends that have influenced, or may influence, educational programs and district operation.

Item 3 - Project the student enrollment and student composition (sex and race/ethnic group) for the district overall, for each grade and for each building. (Indicate whether the district is a member of an area vocational-technical school--AVTS.)

Describe what implications you see for action planning.

Item 4 - Describe each district facility (old or new).

Describe what implications you see for developing action plans.

Item 5 - Describe the employment patterns of the district.

Describe what implications you see for action planning.

Item 6 - Describe the financial trends.

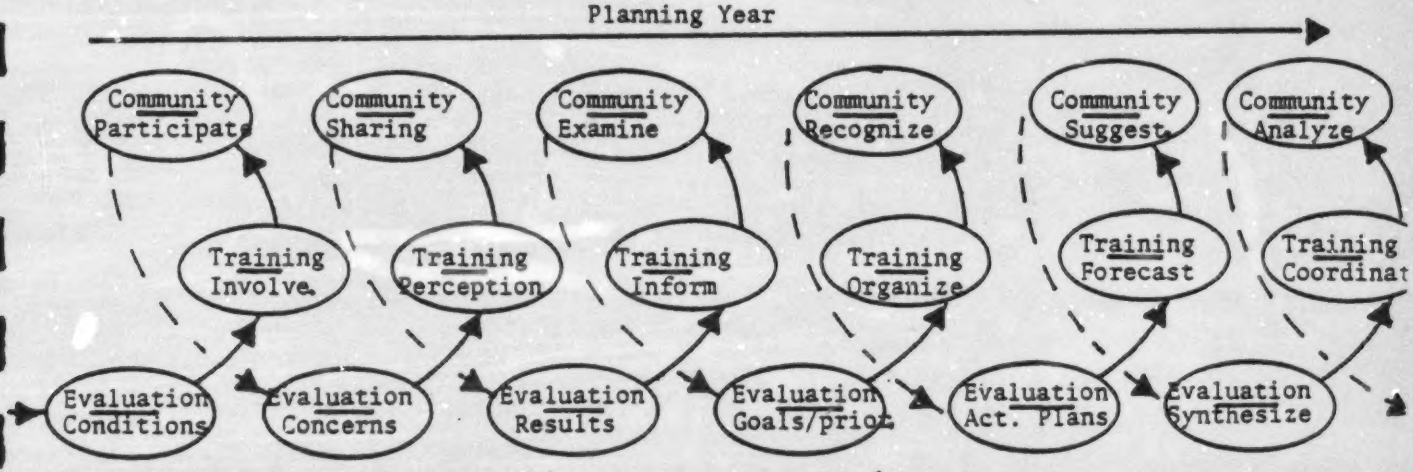
Describe what implications you see for action planning

Item 7 - List the management goal priorities for which action planning will be done.

Since the school districts in Wave 1 were able to design the Needs Assessment stage as a system which would be compatible with the local planning processes, an approach was utilized which combined evaluation, training and community involvement. The chronology of this approach is represented in Chart 2.

Chart 2

EVALUATION, TRAINING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



IV. Evaluation and Development

One approach to the dual demands of conducting a needs assessment and developing building advisory processes is to link training and evaluation activities throughout the planning period. As such, needs assessment proceeds as a means by which local concensus is promulgated through a structure in which building-level leadership is prepared to establish effective relationships with parents, community representatives and teachers. This structure consists of a series of evaluation activities, the intent of which is to promote open discussion of the conditions which exist in a school. The following outline represents an example of this structure:

1. Define current situations.
2. Clarification of current situations: Concerns.
3. School profiles.
4. Goal structure of the school.
5. Determine goal priorities at building level.
6. Prepare building-level Action Plans.
7. Synthesize district-level Action Plans.

Each of the seven activities requires leadership behavior which is both oriented toward the formulation of long-term advisory processes and characterized by specific process skills which will produce substantive information from the advisory groups upon which school improvement can build.

Define the Current Situation

One of the first steps of the school improvement process is to define the current situation within the school. This is crucial and not as easy as it may first appear. It means looking at the school as a whole. You are encouraged to put aside the evaluation of what is happening. That will come later in the needs assessment process.

As a member of a committee of parents, teachers and administrators, you will be working as a team to develop a description of your

school. Through discussion, you will identify those unique areas which are important within your school. Remember than an evaluation is not involved at this time. If various members of the committee disagree about some aspect(s) of the school life, your job is not to resolve the conflict. Rather, record the problem, and present a description of all sides of the issue. Attempts to resolve conflicts will come later in the process. Keep in mind that the task is to produce a complete description of what exists at this time.

The chart, "Focus Areas for School Improvement," has been prepared to help you develop the description of your school. It should be used as a guide. During your discussions, if concerns are identified that do not fit into this guide, the chart may be extended to include new areas. Each square on the chart does not need to be used. Use only those which represent important features of your school.

Because your committee is describing only your school, the information which is reported will be unique. It will not be the same as that which is collected by other committees for other schools. Work specifically with the description of your school.

The chart which is to be used as a guide includes the following terms. Specific definitions for these terms are as follows:

Interaction. This is the exchange of information between and among groups. The exchange has many features and so does the information. For example, exchange may be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, direct (face-to-face) or indirect, etc. Information may be knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, etc.

Parents. In this work, parents includes not only those who have children in the school, but also others in the community.

School Staff. This includes teachers, counselors, building administrators (principals, supervisors, etc.), central administrators, secretaries, cafeteria workers, etc. Any one employed by the school to work with the students is included here.

Students. These are the children in grades K-12 who are a part of the school.

Instruction. In-class activities that directly relate to the curriculum of the school.

Extra-curricular. Those things in the school that do not directly apply to instruction. Examples: sports, clubs, discipline procedures, report cards, etc.

Home/Community. This area includes parts of the school directly related to the home and/or community. Examples: homeowrk, PTA, etc.

How to Use the Chart:

1. In this chart, vertical columns (instruction, extra-curricular,

and home-community) represent areas within the school that are to be considered for school improvement. If you find other areas of major concern, you can add additional columns.

2. The horizontal rows represent major groups within the school. They focus on how these groups interact. For example, "parents and school staff" includes interactions initiated by parents toward school staff and by school staff toward the parents. If there are other significant groups that interact within your school, you can add another horizontal column.

3. To help focus your attention, consider the following situation:

   Good friends of yours are thinking about moving into your neighborhood. They come to you to find out about the school their children would attend. What can you tell them as a fair and accurate picture of what your school is and does?

4. With this situation in mind, refer to the chart. Starting with the first horizontal column, go across the chart square by square. In general terms, talk about what would be included for each. If the area is important in your school, mark it with an "x". If it doesn't have much impact, leave it blank. For example, is the interaction between parents and school staff important for instruction? If it is at your school, put an "x". Working all the way across the chart, put "x's" in the squares that you want to consider in detail later.

5. When you finish, your chart will be marked to show which areas are important for your school. Those that are not important or that don't apply will be blank. Go back over the whole chart to be sure the "x'ed" areas are ones that merit further attention. Eliminate any that are less important.

6. Number each "x-ed" square.

7. One by one go back to each area. Discuss in detail what is included in the area. Write a description of what exists in your school. If there is disagreement among people or groups in the committee, don't argue. Simply list each group's opinion with a full description so that both (or all) sides of the issue are clear.

8. You will have separate papers of each number (which represents a separate chart square). Record the information produced at your meetings. Don't worry about trying to put all of the information together.

9. Using the information you provide, the University of Pittsburgh team will create a narrative of the current situation in your school. When it is ready, they will bring it back to you for your comments and review.

Chart 3

Focus Areas for School Improvement

Interactions Between	Instruction	Extra-curricular	Home/Community
Parents and School Staff			
Parents and Students			
Parents and Other Parents			
School Staff and Students			
School Staff and Other School Staff			
Students and Other Students			

Clarification of Current Situations: Concerns

Each building-level advisory group met next to elaborate on their descriptions of the current situation. These descriptions were reviewed by the Technical Assistance Team and information was condensed in order to minimize the confusion which developed when unnecessary details were reported. Furthermore, when information was vague or confusing, the advisory group was requested to clarify the descriptions. In the following illustration, a full range of issues are reported by one building advisory committee:

Part I: Instructional Issues

Curriculum. Special programs, like Affective Ed., TIPS, JETS, etc., should be incorporated into separate areas (i.e. Social Studies).

Next Step: Examine the current curriculum and consider possible alternatives for change. This needs to be done through the principal.

Part II: Non-Instructional Issues

Bus Transportation. For about three years there have been problems because students are riding buses too long; they must wait too long at school, and the current routes are not satisfactory. In addition, there is a need to develop standards for the qualifications of drivers and for discipline on the buses. Discipline, however, is a minor issue. A shortened elementary day might help to eliminate some of the problems.

Next Step: Discussion session including the bus contractor, central administrators, supervisors and parents.

Classroom Aides. There is inequity between schools resulting from a lack of a district-wide policy. The problem, a concern for several years, affects teachers, parents and students. Currently, there is an unwritten policy that there be 30 or more students in a class before an aide is assigned. Priority is given to the primary grades. Guidelines for aides are needed.

Next Step: Obtain information concerning the policy.

Instructional Supplies. Supplies are not available as they have been in the past. In addition, they are not equally distributed among the schools; the high and middle schools get priority. This has been more of a problem this year than before. Many of the supplies have now been reordered. However, problems sometimes arise because the supply form is antiquated.

Next Step: Obtain a policy in writing concerning ordering and distribution of supplies. Check into the possibility of revising the current forms.

School Staff-Parent Communication. There is a lack of communication between teachers (staff) and parents. Parent club meetings are unsatisfactory. Parent conferences are recommended on a monthly basis. The following specific examples and problems were raised:

1. Teacher/parent conferences are limited because of time. A schedule shift, including a shortened elementary day might make bi-monthly conferences possible.
2. There is a need for more communication.
3. Parent club meetings have poor attendance by both teachers and parents.
4. Parents need to be contacted in positive ways in some areas rather than just negative ones, i.e., absences, poor grades, etc.

Next Step: Find out the limitations for conference release time.

Attendance. There is a similar policy at the elementary, middle and high school level; this policy is enforced. The problem comes from lack of communication.

Religion. There is no written guideline in the district concerning student participation in holiday activities. If it is against a person's religion, he/she cannot be forced to do something. Some guidelines should be established in this area.

Extra Classes. This committee recommends:

1. That these classes be scheduled in the afternoon instead of the morning.
2. That the special teachers be responsible for assigning outstanding and deficient grades.
3. That they share duties with the small (rather thar large) schools.

Scheduling only afternoon special classes may not be possible. The special teachers will check into this problem. Duties should be shared by all, when possible. The principal said that he will check all schedules and talk to both schools to give them committee accurate information.

In order to synthesize the information produced during the initial interactions of the advisory groups so that all participants could acquire a general impression of the current situation after two meetings, an alphabatized list of concerns was developed. The frequency with which each concern was identified by the advisory groups was indicated in parentheses. (Ten advisory groups were formed as this process began.)

The list of Issues of Concern on the next page enabled the advisory groups to acquire an impression of the school district as a total entity. Chart 4 on page 15 was also used to examine the concerns as instructional or non-instructional issues for specific buildings.

Issues of Concern

1.	Art	(6)	25.	Recess	(2)
2.	Busing	(6)	26.	Reading Specialist	(1)
3.	Classroom Aides	(2)	27.	Reporting Grading	(5)
4.	Closed Campus	(1)	28.	School Cancellation	(1)
5.	Creative Learning	(1)	29.	School-Staff and Parent Communications	(2)
6.	Curriculum Coordination	(3)	30.	Scouting	(1)
7.	Declining Enrollment	(1)	31.	Shortages	(1)
8.	Discipline	(2)	32.	Special Programs - LD	(2)
9.	Drugs and Alcohol	(1)	33.	Special Programs - GATE	(2)
10.	Evaluation of Reading	(1)	34.	Sports Program	(1)
11.	Facilities	(3)	35.	Student Attitude	(2)
12.	Food in Cafeteria	(1)	36.	Student-Counselor-Parent Conf.	(2)
13.	Homework	(1)	37.	Student Placement/Schedules	(2)
14.	Instruction (content)	(8)	38.	Staff Cooperation	(2)
15.	Instructional Supplies	(3)	39.	Staff Development	(2)
16.	Kindergarten Program	(1)	40.	Supplies	(1)
17.	Length of School Day	(2)	41.	Teacher Attitude	(1)
18.	Library	(1)	42.	Teacher Incompetence	(1)
19.	Music Department	(1)	43.	Teacher Recruitment	(1)
20.	Nurse	(1)	44	Teachers Switching Rooms	(1)
21.	Open Classroom	(1)	45.	Testing	(1)
22.	Parent Volunteer Program	(1)	46.	Tutoring	(1)
23.	PTA/Parent Interest	(1)	47.	Use of money	(1)
24.	Phasing System	(1)	48.	Vo-Tech	(1)

With the completion of second evaluation activity in the structure, the focus of the needs assessment shifted to the analysis of information about each school as reported in selected official documents such as previous long-range plans, state testing results (EQA) and standardized achievement test data.

School Profiles

The building-level advisory process, with parents, community representatives, teachers and students when appropriate obviously includes the potential for a wide diversity of opinions. Often, when teachers and administrators have been represented in these groups, the tendency has been for other members to defer to these professionals on each issue. Such professionals not only are prepared as specialists in the field but also have access to information not often available to the public at large. Consequently, an effort should be made to neutralize

Chart 4

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Summary of the Concerns

Issue	Sample School	School	School	School	School	School	School	School	School	School	School	Total # of Schools
Part I: Instructional												
1. Art			X	X	X	X		X	X			6
2. Instruction	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)		(X)		(X)		(X)	(X)	(8)
a. Curriculum	X	X										2
b. Curriculum Coordination			X	X								2
c. Homework			X	X								2
d. Penmanship						X						1
e. Reading			X	X								2
f. Reading Evaluation								X				1
g. Current Events/ Georgaphy											X	1
h. Goal Areas 1 & 2										X		1
3. Special Programs-GATE						X					X	2
4. Special Programs-LD			X					X				2
5. Teacher Incompetence											X	1
6. Testing											X	1
7. Tutoring											X	1
8. Vo-Tech											X	1
	1	1	5	4	1	3	0	3	1	1	6	26
Part II: Non-Instructional												
1. Attendance	X	X										2
2. Bus Service	X	X	X	X				X			X	6
3. Classroom Aides	X	X										2
4. Closed Campus											X	1
5. Curriculum Coordination							X					1
6. Discipline						X					X	2
7. Extra Classes	X	X										2
8. Facilities					X	X			X			3
9. Food in the Cafeteria					X							1
10. Homework							X					1
11. Instructional Supplies	X	X									X	3
12. Length of Day	(X)	(X)	X	X		(X)	X					6
13. Nurse							X					1
14. Parent Related	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)		(X)	(10)
a. PFC/Parent Involvement			X	X								2
b. PTA/Parent Interest					X							1
c. Parent Interest							X					1
d. Parental Concern								X				1
e. PTA/Parent Interest									X			1
f. Parent Club						X						1
g. Parent Volunteers						X						1
h. School Staff-Parent Communication						X						1
i. School Staff-Parent Communication	X	X										2
j. Parent-Teacher											X	1
k. Parent-Counselor-Student											X	1
l. Parent-Teacher-School Board								X				1
15. Phasing System											X	1
16. Recess					X		X					2
17. Religion	X	X										2
18. Reporting Grades			X	X		X	X				X	5
19. Scheduling											X	1
20. Shortages							X					1
21. Sports											X	1
22. Student Placement						X						1
23. Teacher Attitude					X							1
24. Teacher Recruitment					X							1
Sub-Total Per School	8	8	4	4	6	8	8	3	2	0	10	61
Totals Per School	9	9	9	8	7	11	8	6	3	1	16	87

X - Indicates the issues identified by each school.
(X) - Indicates an issue that was discussed but which was not given the name of the category per se.

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this deference and to provide each member with information about the school so that each person is able to perform as "informed" participants. The school profile is a document which contains this background data and it is distributed to all members of a given building advisory committee. Since some of the data will be in a form not usually encountered by the general public, the profile includes brief illustrations to facilitate interpretation. The outline below was used to construct each building-level profile:

A. Introduction

B. Summary - Previous Long-Range Plan

1. Section 1: Programs and Services
2. Section 2: School District Management
3. Section 3: Personnel Development
4. Section 4: Community Involvement
5. Section 5: Non-District Support Services

C. Educational Quality Assessment Data

D. Achievement Test Results

E. Title I Achievement Data

Guidelines for Interpreting EQA

Table 1: Comparison of Actual Scores to Predicted Scores
Table 2: Percentiles Per Goal on Statewide Distribution: 1980

Guidelines for Interpreting Achievement Test Scores

Table 3: Actual/Predicted Grade Equivalents
Table 4: Percentage of Students at Each Achievement Level Per Sub-test
Table 5: Students Qualifying for Title 1 Programming

This organizer also provided a transition to the current guidelines for the long-range planning document by utilizing the five mandated sections to summarize previous state long-range planning information. The following example of a school profile was developed for use by an building-level advisory committee. The school name has been changed and selected details of the original profile have been modified to insure anonymity.

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sample School Profile

A. Introduction

The information provided herein has been organized for the Sample Elementary School Improvement Committee. This information comes from the 1976 Long Range Plan, EQA and achievement test data, and other sources. The purpose of this packet is to give you school-specific data in a form that you can easily understand and use in your committee meetings.

As much as possible, the information is organized according to the format required for the 1980 Long Range Plan. After some of the basic information is summarized, there is an organizational chart. This breaks down the Long Range Plan format and indicates which sources of information are needed to complete each.

B. The Commonwealth School District 1976 Long Range Plan (LRP)

The last Long Range Plan (LRP), completed in 1976, was organized differently than the 1980 plan will be. There are several reasons for the change. Most importantly, the state has restructured the format in order to simplify and improve the planning document. For example, the 1976 report contained nine sections while the new plan will be presented in only five. The new form, referred to as the Long Range Plan for School Improvement (LRPSI), includes much of the same information.

Below is a summary of the 1976 plan using the new format.

1. Section I: Programs and Services

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has established a set of goals for quality education which outlines a quality education for students throughout the state. When the LRP was written in 1976, there were ten goals. More recently, these have been reorganized into twelve goals. A copy of these is provided on page 18.

One of the major parts of the 1976 LRP included an examination of Commonwealth School District to identify strengths and weaknesses in the ten goal areas. For each level (elementary, middle, and high school), the plan cited strengths and weaknesses. Using the old ten goal areas, the plan indicated that Sample School was strong in these goal areas:

GOAL I	Self Esteem
GOAL VII	Creativity
GOAL X	Preparing for a Changing World

For each goal there was also an examination of actions taken to improve each weak area. These actions were also organized according to the set of ten goals. Specific actions taken at Sample School, organized by goal area, are listed as follows:

Goal II: Understanding Others

Actions taken: Many discussion activities were held in various classes. These activities dealt with physical characters and economic backgrounds. A world traveler presented a program to the children with the purpose of making them more aware of different cultures. Various activities with a Bicentennial theme were undertaken by each teacher. These activities emphasized the contributions of many ethnic groups,

Observed results: The student became more aware of cultural differences and more tolerant of them. Students responded very favorably by asking many questions. They showed a great interest in the program and were eager to participate.

Goal III-V: Basic Skills-Verbal

Actions taken: At Sample School, teachers felt that students needed to participate in verbal activities with which they were more able to relate, i.e., class plays, experience stories and creative writing. Using any one of these activities, the child is able to draw on his personal experiences which is obviously something he would know. Creating a dialogue about his own experiences helps the child understand the proper choice of words. The reading program was reorganized into levels. The reading program is being used by all primary and intermediate grades. Teachers have also been asked to use supplementary materials to serve as reinforcement and to serve as a motivational device to keep the children interested in reading.

Observed results: In 1975, California Test of Basic Skills showed one grade three classroom scoring one month below ability in reading and three months below ability in language arts. It should be noted that this was only one year after the EQA assessment was completed and some of the suggestions were not fully implemented until this school term. The other third grade showed one month above ability level in reading and two month above ability level in language arts.

Goal III-M: Basic Skills-Math

Actions taken: This was a weakness in two of nine elementary schools. In these schools, teachers suggested two ways of programming, ability grouping and gearing down the math program. In this school, the poorer students were unable to comprehend the mathematics operations when explained on a whole class basis. The shy or introverted students of Sample School have a tendency to volunteer more and to ask more questions when in the surroundings of other students that share similar problems.

In gearing down the math program, teachers have reviewed the tests and have eliminated information that is of little or no value to the student.

Observed results: Individual teacher testing in the classroom has shown improvement in the student's understanding of math. It should be noted that the teachers feel that this same improvement will be seen in the verbal area but at a slightly slower pace--the reasoning being that in math, students are working primarily with numerical symbols rather than words. In 1975, the California Test of Basic Skills reported the math results for the entire school

were three months above ability.

Goal IV: Interest in School

Actions taken: Sample School also had a weakness in Creativity, Goal VII. This school scored low in school percentile but within the expected band. No new programs have been started since the tests were taken. This school has a very good music program at Christmas and again in the Spring. Current plans are to start a Science Fair.

Observed results: None.

Goal V: Citizenship

Actions taken: Bicentennial programs and activities were designed that stressed our heritage and the pride that has been handed down to each of us by our founding fathers. These activities placed emphasis on pride from the community level to the national level. Individual pride was also stressed so that students could develop a positive self-concept and sense of pride and importance.

Community resource people were called upon to speak on different aspects of the community and how students could be affected by community history. State troopers stressed the importance of law and order in the community. The Blind Association showed the students the importance of each and every individual even if a handicap is present. The gas company presented the importance of our fuel resources and how important it is for us to conserve and use wisely our countries natural resources. A drug program was piloted, emphasizing the hazards of smoking.

Observed results: A marked improvement in the students' awareness and their relationship with school has been observed. A feeling of pride has been seen in the school and the community. The students seemed to respect the resource people and more important, they seemed to understand the importance of their jobs and why as citizens we support those people who serve the community.

Goal VI: Health

Actions taken: There are no actions taken nor observed results for this goal in Sample School.

Goal VIII.: Vocational Knowledge

Actions taken: At Sample School, the following community resource people were invited into the classrooms to discuss their careers and occupation: state police, medical personnel, school principal, world traveler, historians, musicians, nutritionist, cake decorator, dairy producer, and librarian. Classes had discussion on job opportunities. Students were encouraged to express opinions and to ask questions. Films and filmstrips were provided to gain insight on all types of occupations.

Dramatization and role-acting were encouraged to teach children the responsibilities and background of vocations. The reading series provided opportunities for gaining knowledge on space, cities, countries, oceanography, antropology, and archeology.

Observed results: Quiet attentiveness was noted during the presentations followed by pertinent questions which evidenced deep interest. There has been greater reading on information gained from this type of exposure. The community resource people also stimulated greater expression for "When I grow up... The children showed deeper understanding of the professions open to them and a desire to continue learning from resource material.

Goal IX: Appreciating Human Accomplishment

Actions taken: At Sample School, several activities were suggested that would increase the students' awareness of human accomplishments. Among these were resource people, community landmarks, films of people, and presentation of reports on famous people.

Observed results: Students appear to recognize the importance of their acceptance of other people and of the goals which others have achieved. A resource person was an excellent way for the students to see how a person can achieve tremendous heights by a personal sacrifice and extending one's self toward others. As a world traveler, the students came to realize that the resource person achieved his own personal goals which can be shared and appreciated by others through oral presentation. Other resource people have had the same effect on the students. Community landmarks have been emphasized noting the achievements and contributions given to the people of the community, both past and present. Students have seen films and have given reports on famour people giving their achievements to the world as well as the nation. It should be noted however that a great amount of emphasis has been placed on some of the smaller achievements so that students understand that everyone can contribute, no matter how great or small the accomplishment. As a result of the Bicentennial activities the students have taken a great deal of pride in the work of others as well as the work they themselves have been doing.

In addition, the LRP provided a list of present and projected objectives and activities for a series of goals. Most of these were worded in very general terms. For example, one elementary goal was "become economically efficient." The activities section was somewhat more specific, including such things as establish a school store; use various posters, filmstrips, films, etc;..." The projected objectives and activities differed from the current ones in that there were more of them.

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Counseling is another service provided by the schools. The 1976 plan included the following information about the counseling program in the elementary schools.

Program Description	District-Identified Strengths & Weaknesses	Projected Objectives
The main emphasis of the elementary guidance program in the Commonwealth District is directed toward developmental counseling for all students. This is early detection and prompt solutions for individual educational, social, and emotional problems. Counselors serve as resource persons for teachers, students & parents. They are concerned that students develop a realistic and favorable self-concept.	The counseling program in the Commonwealth District functions well at the present time. The committee feels that the addition of a black counselor to the district staff would add strength where the greatest need is projected.	The committee feels that one black teacher for each building as well as a black counselor for the district should assist in maintaining a harmonious relationship among all students. The committee feels that this should be a projected objective for the district.

As of 1980 each elementary counselor has an office in one building from which three schools or about 700-750 students are served. Duties include the following: early identification of students with academic, social and/or emotional problems; a brief pre-school screening for vision, hearing, and speech; analysis of CTBS scores for potential referrals (to gifted, Learning Disabilities, and other programs); placement in special programs; conducting evening parenting classes (in which parents learn techniques for working with their children); counseling--students and parents; work with teachers as a resource person in developing strategies for dealing with individuals within a classroom or with the class as a whole; and, work with outside agencies (such as psychologists and psychiatrists).

In 1976, the Special Education Program, operated by the Intermediate Unit and the district, had one primary, one intermediate, one middle school and two secondary classes for the educable mentally retarded. A work experience program was also conducted at the secondary level. The referral system was based on recommendations of the teacher with follow-up by I.U. psychologists prior to placing the student in a Special Education class.

Most students in the special education classes were in regular classes for physical education, art, home economics, industrial arts and music, where possible. Provision had been made for the student to move into regular classes if the teacher felt he could meet the requirements and would benefit by such a move.

The gifted and talented program was making significant progress. It was recommended that there be a complete continuum of programs and services.

2. Section II: School District Management

The Commonwealth School District contains rural, suburban and urban communities. In 1976 there were 2500 elementary and 2525 secondary students. The LRP included the prediction that by 1981, elementary enrollment would increase by 200 and secondary enrollment would drop about 400. Actually elementary students enrollment has dropped about 300 (to 2200 students) and secondary enrollment is about the same (2525).

Student, teachers, administrators, and staff are predominately white with a small percentage of Blacks (3% district-wide), Asian Americans, and Spanish surnames. Students attend nine elementary, one middle, and one high school. The breaddown of student and professional staff composition for the Sample School and the Commonwealth District is as follows:

Students	AA	AI	BL(%)	SA	WH	Totals
District Totals (1976)	8	16	150(2.7)	0	5555	5737
Projected (1981)	40	0	340(5.1)	0	6225	6605
Present (1980)	4	0	136(2.6)	7	4797	4949
Sample School (1976)	0	0	0	0	189	189
Projected (1981)	0	0	15(6)	0	235	256
Present (1980)	0	0	0	1	173	174

AA = Asian Americans; AI = American Indians; BL = Black; SA = Spanish Surnames; WH = White

Special Programs - 1980-1981

Ten students from Central, Sample and South Schools attend a Special Education (Educationally Mentally Retarded) class held at Central School. There is one full-time teacher. Five students attend an itinerant LD (Learning Disabled) class. Thirty students are involved in the remedial reading program with one half-time teacher. There are no students from Sample School involved in the gifted program.

Professional Staff - This data from the Sample School is for 1976. No changes were expected.

		AA	AI	BL	SA	WH	Totals
Administrators/ Supervisors	Male	0	0	0	0	.33	.33
	Female	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0	0	.33	.33
Teachers	Male	0	0	0	0	6	6
	Female	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Total	0	0	1	0	6	7
Coordinated Services	Male	0	0	0	0	.66	.66
	Female	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Total	0	0	0	0	1.66	1.66

Although some district-wide changes in facilities were predicted in 1976, none have actually occurred. Sample School was built in 1962 and includes 8 acres. Student capacity is 180; the building was in very good condition in 1976. It was projected that an addition to the school would be needed in 1980.

Financial outlook for the district area was described as being stable.

3. Section III: Personnel Development

The Intermediate Unit and the school district provide development programs for several groups including teachers, administrators, counselors, board members, bus drivers, nurses and teacher aids. In addition, the district provides for librarians, library aids, para-professionals and the solicitor. By 1981, it was projected that the Intermediate Unit would also provide programs for librarians. The district also planned to conduct a needs assessment and set priorities.

4. Section IV: Community Involvement

The district used the local papers and existing organizations in the community to notify citizens of developments associated with the long-range plan. A list of those involved and the meeting dates was provided. This list is not divided into schools, but rather everyone is on one list. For 1976-1981 the plan indicated that better communication between school and community needed to be developed. More community involvement in the decision making process was also forseen through continued group meetings.

5. Section V: Non-District Support Services

For the 1980 document, this section will include a list of non-district resources used and needed by Commonwealth District. This will include organizations such as the Intermediate Unit, universities, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The 1976 plan did not include this information.

C. Educational Quality Assessment (EQA) Data

This test is given by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Research and Evaluation. It is used at every grade level in order to objectively measure the adequacy and efficiency of educational progress offered by public schools. Because it is used state-wide, districts can use the data to compare its performance with other schools throughout the state.

EQA data was collected in the spring of 1974, 1977, and 1980. Resulting information related to the Sample School is included in this packet. Also included are explanations designed to help understand the EQA data.

D. Achievement Test Results: Metropolitan Readiness Test (MET) Data

This achievement test was given to students of grades one and four across the district. In addition, it was given as a readiness test to kindergarten students. The 1980 MET results provided are not actual scores. Instead they show the percentage of students whose areas fell within various ranges on the overall scale. The data for Sample School and an explanation of it is included in this packet.

Comprehensive Tests for Basic Skills (CTBS) Data

The CTBS was used to assess achievement in most grades where the MET was not used; that is, second, third, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grades. The information provided here gives the scores in terms of grade equivalency. The data and an explanation of it are provided in this packet.

E. Title I Achievement Data

This data gives the number of student per school and per grade who were eligible for Title I in June 1980. One criteria to determine eligibility was the CTBS results.

Guidelines for Interpretation of Table I

The information on the table shows the result of a comparison of actual EQA scores to a predicted score range. No data, per se, is presented on the table. For each goal area tested, a predicted score range was indicated by testing specialists at the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). To arrive at a predicted score, several conditions such as financial (resources and physical facilities) were taken into consideration . The actual obtained score then was compared to the predicted score range. A school either performed above (A), below (B), or within (W) the predicted interval. On the table, A, W, or B is given per year, for each goal.

At the bottom of the table are percentages which relate, for any given year, the proportion of goals which fell above (A), within, (W), or below (B) the predicted score intervals.

Table 1

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ASSISSMENT
COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comparison of Actual Scores to Predicted Scores

Sample School

	Year 73-74	76-77	79-80
1. Self-Esteem	A	W	W
2. Understanding Others	W	W	W
3. Basic Skills: Reading	W	W	W
3a Basic Skills:Writing	-	-	W
3b Basic Skills: Math	W	W	A
4. Interest in School	W	W	W
5. Societal Responsibility	W	B	W
6. Health Knowledge	W	W	A
7. Creative Activities	A	A	W
8. Career Awareness	W	W	W
9. Arts and Humanities	W	A	W
10. Science and Technology	W	W	W
11. Knowledge of Government	-	-	A
[illegible] Information Usage	-	-	W
Key:			
Percent per school: A	18%	18%	25%
W	82%	73%	75%
B	0	9%	0

Guidelines for Interpretation of Table 2

Table 2 includes a percentile for each goal measured on the EQA. The percentiles indicate a point on a scale. Below that point lie the scores of a given percentage of schools throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Percentile scores range from 1 to 99. A percentile score of 75, for example, means that 75 percent of the schools in the state scored lower on a particular goal than the school at the 75th percentile. It does not mean that the students of the school answered 75 percent of the questions correctly.

Taken together, Tables 1 and 2 can provide EQA information on two levels. Table 2 compares your school to schools across the state. Table 1 considers your school as a distinct unit with special conditions which might influence the scores. Because of these different viewpoints, discrepancies in scoring may result. It is at this point that a value judgment must be made to decide which of these two scoring systems is most appropriate. To illustrate, look at Table 1, Science and Technology (Goal 10); the indicated score for 1979-80 is W. This tells you that Sample School's score fell within the predicted range. Now, look at Table 2. The indicated percentile for Science and Technology is 20. This tells you that even though Sample's score fell within the predicted range, 80 percent of the other schools in the state scored higher than yours.

Table 2

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT
COMMONWEALTH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Percentiles Per Goal on Statewide Distribution 1980

Sample School

Goals		Percentile
1.	Self-Esteem	10
2.	Understanding Others	5
3.	Basic Skills: Reading	60
3a.	Basic Skills: Writing	30
3b.	Basic Skills: Math	75
4.	Interest in School	5
5.	Societal Responsibility	55
6.	Health Knowledge	85
7.	Creative Activities	35
8.	Career Awareness	60
9.	Arts and Humanities	15
10.	Science and Technology	20
11.	Knowledge of Government	99
12.	Information Usage	40

Guideline to Interpretation of Table 3

The information presented in Table 3 was taken from the results of the March 1980 achievement testing. The test used in grades 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 was the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS). Scores, presented by grade and subtest, are reported as grade-equivalents.

When a student takes a test his score is recorded as the number of items correct. This score is then changed into a grade-equivalent. A grade-equivalent is reported as a mixed decimal fraction (7.6). The whole number (7) refers to a grade level. The fractional part (.6) refers to a month of the school year within that grade level. For example, a score of 52 may have a grade-equivalent of 7.6. This is interpreted to mean that all those pupils taking the test during the sixth month of the seventh grade had an average test score of 52.

As noted above, the months of the school year are assigned a decimal fraction. For convenience, the school year is usually considered to have nine months. The table below shows that September is assigned a decimal equivalent of .0, October .1, etc.

Month of school year	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
Decimal part of G.E.	.0	.1	.2	.3	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9

Special precautions must be taken when interpreting grade-equivalent scores.

1. Do not misinterpret a high grade-equivalent. If a fourth grade student scores a 9.6 on math, this does not mean he can do 9th grade work. It means only that he has mastered his 4th grade math.

2. Do not regard small differences in the decimal part of the score as important. The grade-equivalent scoring system has some inaccuracies which must be taken into account.

3. Do not compare grade-equivalents of different tests or subtests. Each test has its own difficulty level, and a higher score may merely indicate an easier test.

Table 3

COMPREHENSIVE TEST OF BASIC SKILLS (CTBS)

March 1980 Testing

Average Grade Equivalents per Grade Level--Actual and Predicted: Sample School

Grade	Scores	Reading Total	Language Total	Math Total	Reference Skills	Science	Social Studies	Number of Students
2	Actual Score	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.3	-	-	21
	Predicted Score	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.4	-	-	
3	Actual Score	4.7	4.9	4.7	5.5	-	-	32
	Predicted Score	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.3	-	-	
5	Actual Score	7.0	7.7	6.6	8.5	-	-	27
	Predicted Score	7.1	7.6	6.6	7.2	-	-	

March is designated as the sixth month in the grade equivalent scoring system.
Reference scores per grade are then 2.6, 3.6, and 5.6 respectively.

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Guidelines to Interpretation of Table 4

Table 4 presents information on the Metropolitan Achievement Test (METS). The Mets were given in kindergarten, grades one and four. There is an individual chart for each of these grade levels which indicates the proportion of students scoring below average, average, and above average for each of the given subtests (i.e., reading, mathematics, language, etc.). In determining a student's performance level, his/her score was compared to those of students across the country.

Metropolitan Achievement Test
April 30, 1979 Testing

Table 4

Percentage of Students at Each Achievement Level Per Subtest
Sample School

FIRST GRADE

Subtest	Achievement Level		
	Below Average	Average	Above Average
Reading	9%	59%	32%
Mathematics	0	41%	59%
Language	0	36%	64%
Number of Students Tested = 22			

KINDERGARTEN

Subtest	Achievement Level		
	Below Average	Average	Avove Average
Auditory	49%	47%	4%
Visual	23%	61%	16%
Language	27%	57%	16%
Pre-Reading	28%	68%	4%
Quantitative	33%	49%	18%
Number of Students Tested = 49			

FOURTH GRADE

Subtest	Achievement Level		
	Below Average	Average	Above Average
Reading	4%	81%	15%
Mathematics	7%	81%	12%
Language	15%	75%	11%
Number of Students Tested = 27			

Guidelines for the Interpretation of Table 5

Table 5 includes the information used in establishing a Title I program. Given on the table are the number of students per grade level who qualify for Title I. Also given is the percentage of students qualifying; the percentage is merely the number of students divided by the total students in that grade.

The last row of the table summarizes the data above it by presenting a total school picture.

Achievement test scores are used to determine whether or not a student qualifies. Those students with scores falling below a specified level (i.e., 3 months, 6 months, 1 year or 2 years, depending on the grade) are indicated.

Table 5

Students Qualifying for Title I Programming[a]

Sample School

Grade	Number Qualifying Total Students	Percentage Qualifying
2	-	-
3	3/21	14%
4	3/22	6%
5	3/27	11%
Total School	9/80	10%

[a]Students qualifying for Title I funding have scores which meet the following achievement standards:

Grade	Below Grade Level
2	2 mo.
3	6 mo.
4,5	1 yr.

The achievement tests used were the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS) and the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (METS).

Goal Structure of the School

Social systems such as school districts typically exist to satisfy multiple goals. Schools claim to be concerned about skill acquisition, social interaction, personal growth as well as citizenship development of students. These multiple goals tend to compete for limited resources and consequently, the indices of outcomes reveal wide variations in performance. The reality is that schools, like other social systems, do not meet all goals with equal efficiency of effectiveness. Priorities do exist. In planning activities such as the LRPSI, processes should be developed to identify these priorities.

Several techniques can be used to explicate these priorities such as ranking of goals in terms of perceived importance, scrutinizing budgetary allocations, gathering opinions from informed adults and analyzing operational practices. Since time is distributed in schools in differentiated lots, the study of time allocations could reveal important operational priorities of the system. The following exercise was conducted with members of the advisory committees and the professional staff of the schools:

How Should Time be Allocated in School?

According to some observers of schools, one can determine what is important in any school or classroom by studying the allocation of time to classes or activities. Those who believe this to be true claim that schools schedule more time for the important matters and less time for the unimportant.

In order to obtain the opinions of administrators, parents and teachers about the relative importance of school goals, the following exercise has been developed:

1. If you were responsible for establishing the schedule of the school, what percentage of time in a typical school week would you allocate for each of the twelve goal areas established by the State Board of Education? (If you wanted each goal to be allocated equal time, each should be assigned 8.3%)

2. Review the goals and assign each goal a percentage of time. Your total allocation of time should equal 100%. Do so for each school level such as elementary, middle and high school.

3. After you complete the time allocations, complete the column which refers to how well informed you are about each of the goals listed on the chart. Use the scale below:

   1 = uninformed
   2 = poorly informed
   3 = Adequately informed
   4 = well informed

   For example, if you are aware of the courses and activities which are used to develop communications skills, rate the goal as 3 or 4 depending on the level of your awareness.

Chart 5

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
Distribution of Instructional Time

Goals for Quality Education	Elementary	Middle	High	How Well Informed are You About This Goal
1. Communication Skills	%	%	%	
2. Mathematics	%	%	%	
3. Self-Esteem	%	%	%	
4. Analytical Thinking	%	%	%	
5. Understanding Others	%	%	%	
6. Citizenship	%	%	%	
7. Arts and Humanities	%	%	%	
8. Science and Humanities	%	%	%	
9. Work	%	%	%	
10. Family Living	%	%	%	
11. Health	%	%	%	
12. Environment	%	%	%	
Total	100%	100%	100%	

The findings of this survey were summarized as reported on Table 6.

Table 6

TIME ALLOCATION FOR GOAL AREAS

Commonwealth School District

Goal Area	Elementary			Middle School			High School		
	%	Min/ Wk	Level of Information	%	Min/ Wk	Level of Information	%	Min/ Wk	Level of Information
1. Communication Skills									
Parents	28.5	470	2.9	18.7	355	2.9	17.9	295	2.9
Teachers	33.6	555	3.6	15.6	297	3.3	13.5	223	3.2
Combined	31.1	513	3.3	17.2	326	3.1	15.7	259	3.1
2. Mathematics									
Parents	13.5	223	2.9	14.7	279	2.9	13.4	221	2.9
Teachers	12.3	203	3.1	11.6	220	3.1	10.5	173	3.0
Combined	12.9	213	3.0	13.15	250	3.0	11.95	197	2.95
3. Self Esteem									
Parents	6.6	109	2.3	6.9	131	2.3	6.3	104	2.3
Teachers	6.2	102	3.3	6.0	114	2.8	7.4	122	3.1
Combined	6.4	106	2.8	6.45	122	2.6	6.85	113	2.7
4. Analytical Thinking									
Parents	5.9	97	1.7	7.5	142	1.7	8.6	142	1.7
Teachers	5.2	86	2.7	6.6	125	3.1	7.0	116	2.8
Combined	5.55	91	2.2	7.05	134	2.4	7.8	129	2.3
5. Understanding Others									
Parents	5.8	96	2.4	6.4	121	2.4	6.4	106	2.4
Teachers	5.6	92	3.3	8.0	152	2.8	7.1	117	3.0
Combined	5.7	94	2.8	7.2	136	2.6	6.75	112	2.2
6. Citizenship									
Parents	5.0	83	2.7	6.3	119	2.7	6.2	102	2.7
Teachers	5.7	94	3.2	6.5	124	2.8	8.1	134	3.2
Combined	5.35	89	3.0	6.4	122	2.75	7.15	118	3.0
7. Arts and Humanities									
Parents	5.4	89	2.5	7.1	135	2.5	6.4	106	2.5
Teachers	5.1	83	2.8	7.0	133	2.8	6.8	112	2.9
Combined	5.25	86	2.7	7.05	134	2.7	6.6	109	2.7
8. Science and Technology									
Parents	6.2	102	2.6	10.0	190	2.6	9.5	157	2.6
Teachers	6.5	108	2.7	14.0	266	2.8	9.5	157	2.9
Combined	6.35	105	2.65	12.0	228	2.7	9.5	157	2.75
9. Work									
Parents	2.9	48	2.5	5.2	99	2.5	6.9	114	2.5
Teachers	4.6	76	2.4	5.6	106	2.9	9.4	155	3.2
Combined	3.75	62	2.45	5.4	102	2.7	8.15	135	2.9
10. Family Living									
Parents	4.0	66	2.3	5.3	100	2.3	6.1	100	2.3
Teachers	4.8	78	2.8	5.6	106	2.8	6.6	108	3.2
Combined	4.4	72	2.6	5.45	103	2.6	6.35	104	2.8
11. Health									
Parents	11.5	190	2.8	6.4	121	2.8	6.6	109	2.8
Teachers	6.2	103	3.3	7.5	143	3.0	7.6	126	3.1
Combined	8.85	102	3.1	6.95	132	2.9	7.1	117	2.9
12. Environment									
Parents	4.7	77	2.4	5.7	108	2.4	5.7	94	2.4
Teachers	4.2	70	2.9	6.0	114	2.7	6.5	107	2.9
Combined	4.45	73	2.7	5.85	111	2.6	6.1	100	2.7
Total	100	1650		100	1900		100	1650	

% = Percent of instructional time devoted each week to the goal.
Min/Wk = Number of minutes allocated to the goal, based on a 27.5 hour instructional week.
Level of Information = Indicates how well informed participants judged themselves to be on a 1 (low) to 4 (high) scale.

Determine Goal Priorities at the Building Level

As the planning processes develop from the initial identification of concerns to the level of understanding of existing conditions as measured by a variety of assessment practices, the advisory groups must begin to identify the constraints within which the school improvement process exists. Building-level planning should be focused on specific areas as the targets for improvement. One procedure which enables the building advisory committees to restrict the planning context is the identification of building-specific priorities.

In order to prioritize activity at the building level, participants in the advisory process can be asked to refer to the goal categories as a structure which can be classified in terms of importance. However, this activity at the building level is completed after all participants have the opportunity to examine goal priorities at the district level as well as the concerns of the advisory groups. With this information as background, participants may recognize the context within which Action Plans reside. In the following example, building advisory groups were instructed to assess the importance of each goal category:

Chart 6

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Goal Priorities

Building _____

The goal categories for quality education are listed below. Each participant in this planning process should have available the detailed description of these goals and the instructional goals and objectives for the Sample Area School District. From the list below, identify the building priorities using three categories--high priority, medium priority and low priority.

After each goal category is assigned a priority, identify important considerations to be included in planning for the goals.

Goal Category	Priority	Considerations
1. Communication Skills		
2. Mathematics		
3. Self-esteem		
4. Analytical Thinking		
5. Understanding Others		
6. Citizenship		
7. Arts and Humanities		
8. Science and Technology		
9. Work		
10. Family Living		
11. Health		
12. Environment		

Table 7

GOAL PRIORITIES BY SCHOOL

Goals	Sample Elementary	Elementary 1	Elementary 2	Elementary 3	Elementary 4	Elementary 5	Middle	High School
Communication Skills	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
Mathematics	L	H	H	H	M	H	H	H
Self-Esteem	M	M	M	H	H	M	H	L
Analytical Thinking	M	M	M	H	M	H	M	H
Understanding Others	H	M	H	H	H	M	H	M
Citizenship	H	M	M	M	M	M	M	H
Arts and Humanities	L	H	H	M	H	M	M	M
Science and Technology	L	H	H	M	M	H	M	H
Work	M	M	L	L	L	L	M	M
Family Living	M	M	L	L	L	L	M	M
Health	L	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Environment	L	M	M	M	M	H	M	M

H = High Priority
M = Medium Priority
L = Low Priority

Prepare Building-Level Action Plans

Action Plans represent the specific building-level agenda for school improvement. In developing this agenda with building advisory groups, it is advisable to avoid premature planning or the designation of improvement efforts before the needs assessment processes are completed. Furthermore, a structure is needed as a guideline for the preparation of these planning units. The following format was utilized and the information included was developed by a building-level advisory committee.

Chart 7

LONG RANGE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Action Plan
Commonwealth School District

Building Middle School

Goal Category: Communication Skills

1. What student improvement do you propose?

   By end of grade eight, all students will construct a complete paragraph which summarizes the main points of a short story.

2. What changes are needed to accomplish the proposed student improvement? (Check one of the responses for each item. Elaborate below on the changes you believe are most important.)

	Yes	No	Uncertain	Not Enough Information
A. Program	X			
B. School Environment	X			
C. Instructional Practices	X			
D. Resource Allocations		X		
E. Supervision		X		
F. Staff Development Practices	X			
G. District Policies		X		
H. District Procedures		X		

	Yes	No	Uncertain	Not Enough Information
I. District Structures		X		

Comment: Access to the library will need to be evaluated to determine if students have the opportunity to use this resource.

3. What major activities do you propose be undertaken to accomplish the proposed student improvement?

   Beginning in grade six, students will be required to complete four major writing assignments each year in Language Arts.

4. How would you schedule these activities: What timeline do you suggest?

   1981-82 - Establish expectations for grades 6, 7, 8, in Writing Literature usage.

   1982-83 - Develop curriculum for Language Arts emphasizing writing prospects based upon the need of each instructional group.

   1983-84 - Establish curriculum for Language Arts. Establish criteria for promotion to grade 9.

5. What person or position title should be responsible for the change you propose?

   District Curriculum Coordinator.
   Principal and Language Arts department head.

6. If you have an estimate of the cost of this activity, indicate the amount? If you have no idea of the cost, indicate that.

   No idea.

7. If you have ideas about how this proposed change can be evaluated, report your suggestions.

   In the first year, collect samples of writing and begin to construct criteria for acceptable performance.

Synthesize District-Level Action Plans

The final phase of the planning cycle involves the construction of a district-wide perspective for school improvement. By so doing, building advisory groups and those responsible for coordination can acquire a sense of the total school improvement effort and the many issues which develop when local problem solving is promoted and coordination of services and resources is advocated. Conflicting

priorities and multiple Action Plans obviously can create the impression of an absence of district-wide coordination. Yet, local problem solving processes need to be promoted in the school improvement program. Organized information represents the first step in a series of processes which can enable school leaders to maintain a balance between building-level change and district-level developments. In Chart 8, critical information regarding test results, priorities and Action Plans is organized so leaders and building advisory groups can share in working on these problems. Among the questions which could emerge from an examination of Chart 8 are the following:

1. Can district-wide coordination be realized when certain goal categories are not addressed in Action Plan?
2. Should all High Priority areas be addressed through Action Plans?
3. What will the impact be when about one-third of all Action Plans are related to Communication Skills?
4. Will the number of Action Plans at each building influence implementation processes?

Chart 8

SUMMARY
GOAL PRIORITIES, EQA LOW PERCENTILES AND ACTION PLANS

Twelve Goals	Elementary	Elem.	Elem.	Elem.	Elementary	Elem.	Elem.	Middle	High	Total Action Plans by Goals
Communication Skills	1, 13 H •	7 •	20, 21, 22 H •	16, 17 H	28, 30 H	32 H	34, 35 H	44 H •	45 H	15
Mathematics	L	6 •	23, 24 H	15 H	29 H	H	36 H	43 H •	H	7
Self-Esteem	2, 9 H •	•	H	H	25 H •	H	H	42 H •	L	4
Analytical Thinking	H	•	H	H	H	H	H	H •	H	0
Understanding Others	12 H •	•	H	H	H	H	H	41 H •	H	2
Citizenship	10, 11 H	5 •	19 H •	H	H	H	37 H	H •	46 H	6
Arts and Humanities	L •		H	H	27 H •	H	H	H	H	1
Science and Technology	L •	4 •	18 H •	14 H	26 H •	31 H	38 H	H •	H	6
Work	3 H	•	H	L	L	L	39 L	H •	H	2
Family Living	H		H	L	L	L	L	H	H	0
Health	L	8 •	H	H	H	33 H	40 H	H	H	3
Environment	L		H	H	H	H	H	H	H	0
Total Action Plans by Building	8	5	7	4	6	3	7	4	2	n = 46

1 through 46 = Action Plans
H, M, L = High, Medium, Low Priority
• = EQA Results, 30th Percentile or lower

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Summary--Commonwealth School District Example

Action Planning for programs and services may represent the most critical aspect of the first year in school improvement. The case history described in this section has been presented as one approach to the planning tasks. Clearly, evaluation tasks drive this approach. Another feature of the Commonwealth School District example is that deliberate approaches were used to prepare all participants to engage in planning. Principals, supervisors and counselors who led building advisory groups were provided short-term training which was focused on the immediate evaluation task. But even more important, participants from the community were also prepared for these tasks and were provided information about the schools in a form which was understandable to them. In brief, the lesson learned is an old one. One cannot plan effectively if unprepared to do so. Planning demands preparation.

V. Leadership Training, Evaluation and Development

The role of leadership in a planning process such as LRPSI requires more than a casual reference. Those who assume that no specialized skills and knowledge are needed by principals, supervisors and other administrators may be underestimating the demands of planning which support school improvement. Leaders need to be able to do more than simply answer the questions included in state guidelines.

Among the factors which complicate the planning, none is more critical than the mandate that community advisory groups be formed to actively participate in planning for school improvement. This situation is problematic from the point decisions are made about the organization of advisory groups. Will participation be open and voluntary or will selected representatives be requested to form the building advisory committees? Then, as the planning begins, leaders face the challenge of promoting both active participation and debate

along with local concensus formation. The process skills required to effectively lead the advisory groups are complex and those who neglect to master these competencies probably will not realize the potential of effective community participation to improve schools. These activities not only serve to respond to the questions posed in planning outlines but also provide the spirit and enthusiasm which has been observed to exist in practically all improvement projects. School improvement will not likely achieve the most modest expectations if participants in the advisory processes find the planning either boring because it deals with trivia or an "after the fact" activity with all important decisions made by administrators before the meetings begin.

In order to address the need for leadership training during the planning year, the Technical Assistance Agency in this case history structured the advisory process and prepared principals, supervisors and counselors to lead building-level groups. The plan involved training activities for each building advisory meeting. Consequently, the group leaders had the opportunity to examine the expectations held for them and to discuss various leadership approaches with their colleagues. This short-term preparation was aimed toward specific tasks to be accomplished at each meeting. The approach was one of high structure with reasonably clear outcomes which were to be attained at each meeting. Chart 2, page 7, contains a description of this process. To illustrate, consider the first cycle on this diagram. The evaluation task was to identify current conditions with the advisory group. Leadership preparation for the task focused on facilitating behavior by principals and other group leaders. Community representations were expected to participate actively in the discussions. Each cycle of the evaluation, training and community involvement process was driven by the evaluation tasks to be accomplished in order to plan for school improvement.

VI. Documentation and School Improvement

The recent history of evaluation practices in educational settings is marked by a dramatic increase in methodological alternatives. While not long ago, research paradigns predominated evaluation projects and the pretest-post test design was applied without reasonable analysis of its appropriateness to the problem being investigated. Presently, more alternatives are acceptable and evaluation research has grown as a legitimate form of inquiry.

One practice which has increased during the change is that of project description. Grounded in many fields of social science including sociology, anthropology and history, project description or documentation has frequently captured the substance of social interaction when other approaches have failed. Project implementation activity represents a case in point. The research on the practices of implementation has frequently relied upon procedures such as descriptive reporting, interviewing and participant observation techniques to capture the nuances of practice.

Nevertheless the documentation of school improvement practices could begin at any point, including the planning period. When, however, a commitment is made at the school level to carefully analyze the events which contribute to both successful and unsuccessful implementation, Action Plans begin to be recognized as one of the major differences between long-range planning in the '70's and the present conception of this practice. Documentation, when practiced as a collection of techniques by which project participants can acquire insight into developments, make decisions to modify delivery and study problematic conditions looms as one of the key elements which can link planning with practice.

Elaborate techniques are not needed to do so. Documentation can simply focus on the intended improvement which is identified in the Action Plan.

Participants can be asked to testify to the presence or absence of these outcomes. And documentation can be expanded so that project participants report the critical events which contributed to developments. The following set of questions can serve to organize a local documentation process:

1. What were the most effective implementation tactics used during Year Two?
2. What were the least effective implementation tactics used during Year Two?
3. What unanticipated events contributed to or detracted from implementation activities?
4. What important episodes marked the implementation processes? Why did these events occur? What are the probable implications of the episode for school improvement.

Clearly, other questions can be framed to document a project. In a general sense, the design for documentation is as displayed in Chart 9.

Chart 9

ELEMENTS OF A DOCUMENTATION PROCESS